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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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ALL-SIDEDNESS IN CHRISTIAN LIFE.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."—Eph. vi. 13.

This phrase is repeated. It occurs in the 11th verse, and again in the 13th.

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

By nature Paul was a general. He had all those sympathetic and magnetic qualities which tended powerfully to influence men. He had the sense, as it may be said, of mankind. He knew their feelings. He knew how to approach them. He had an intense nature. He was full of allowable ingenuity and strategy in the art of thinking. His figures are not meditative. They are almost never drawn from the quiet aspects of nature. There is very little of simple sweetness and simple beauty in them. The idea of beauty seems hardly to have entered into his mind. It is inconceivable that a man should have gone to Athens in the day of its glory, and seen that which one might almost give a life to see, and should have left no word about it. No statue glitters in his reminiscences. Of no temple did he give any description. The gorgeousness and glory of Grecian painting and Grecian art at large seem to have left upon his mind almost no trace. Nor do we find anywhere a sense of the beautiful in his mind and thought. But wherever men strove to the uttermost, there he saw something. His whole soul was filled

SUNDAY MORNING, November 2, 1873. LESSON: Matt. iii. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 636, 655, 657.

with the thought of men—men developed to energy. Whatever there was brought forth anywhere of skill and zeal and endeavor furnished him themes for contemplation. Men practicing athletic games, men at work, soldiers in armies—these provided him with illustrations. Though some of his figures are drawn from the household, some from civil life, and some from governments, they are all astir. They march. They move. It could not have been otherwise.

The best pointed arrow may go leisurely flying through the air from a weak bow; but even a poor arrow whizzes from a bow of steel; and whatever the figures were, when Paul let them fly, they went! Here he brings up before the mind the equipment of an old Roman soldier, covered with iron from head to foot, waiting for attack, and withstanding to the uttermost.

Now, Christ came to put an end to war; he was the Prince of peace and good-will toward men; and it is strange enough that a warlike figure should have been chosen to designate the life of a follower of Christ; yet, there was no unfitness in it. The spiritual conflicts of men, or their endeavors to live aright—evading, resisting, overcoming, subduing utterly, or annihilating spiritual enemies—these are a part of the great warfare in life; and so the illustration is not an unfit one. It implies the all-surrounding dangers that beset a Christian man, and the need of most ample and thorough preparation on the part of every Christian for the life-conflict.

According to the apostle's view, every one who would rise into a full Christian state of mind, and abide in it, must put forth efforts to that end. We cannot inherit religion. We may inherit more or less a moral constitution; we may inherit aptitudes in the direction of religious thought and religious emotion; but character was never born, nor does it ever come by accident. Character is built up from the very foundation. It is but another name for consecutive habits; and habits are the results to which men come by successive and continuous operations of their own will. Nothing, more than a high religious character, demands that men should put forth the utmost exertions, and exertions long continued.

The adversaries which the apostle mentions here are worthy of our regard for a moment:

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood."

That is, we do not wrestle against them principally. We are not to take our measure from them. We wrestle against governments, against the rulers of the world, against powers, whatever they may be, and wherever they may be.

"We wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

There is something in this very obscurity; there is something in this very amplitude of description of dangers above, dangers below, dangers on every side, dangers from common men, dangers from magistrates, dangers from governments, dangers from occupations, dangers from within and from without, dangers everywhere and always, dangers that environ us in every way, dangers proceeding from all sorts of temptation—there is something in these things which would seem to make it necessary for us to arm ourselves, and to never cease watching and fortifying ourselves against the multitudes of evils which surround us. We are nowhere and at no time free from liabilities to temptation and downfall.

The customs and usages of life in business or pleasure all tend powerfully to educate, not the highest nature but the lowest feelings, as they are conducted by men. For though I do aver that the course of nature and the normal operations of society are moral educators, and were designed to be such, and have inherent tendencies which are constantly striving to produce in men a moral basis and a moral character; yet, these natural schools where men are educated to higher and truer manliness are constantly perverted. They are under influences which tend to make them false educators; so that this world, which should teach men industry, and frugality, and foresight, and sympathy man with man, and kindness, and punctuality, and truth, and honor, and fairness, is teaching them these things in a measure; but, after all, it teaches them pride, and inordinate self-reliance, and vanity, and avarice, and selfishness, and brutal combativeness. It fills them with all manner of unregulated passions and appetites.

But you cannot avoid this. If you go out of the world to get rid of the temptations which spring from without, you fall upon temptations that spring from within. For no man is in such fatal danger as the man who is lazy, and who is with himself alone or mainly. There are no temptations which work such mean fermentations as those which spring upon men who live solitary lives. Though outward associations, by turning a man unduly one way or another, may impair the moral tone of his character to a certain extent; yet they carry with them a sanitary influence, many of them; and a man who has broken away from his fellows, and retired from life; a man who feels at liberty to go out from the great battle of manhood, and sequester himself, and dwell in his own sweet meditations, and live for his own perfection; one who avoids burdens, and yokes, and conflicts, and dangers—such a man is the meanest of men. There is in him a lack of pluck, a lack of stamina, a lack of moral enterprise, a lack of generosity, a lack of large benevolence, which is indispensable to manhood.

So, then, you cannot go out of life if you would. You meet the grim devil of selfishness, you meet the minor evils of life more in solitude than anywhere else. In life you meet all the fiery seductions which come from one spirit or another of the passions and appetites which are inflamed among men, the strong biasing the weak, and those of inordinate means sweeping away those who have little or no means, and the wise domineering over the simple. If you go into the Church, it has its dangers and temptations. If you go into the Exchange, it has its own liabilities and perils. If you go into the street, you find dangers there. In the wilderness, on the highway, upon the sea, in foreign lands, at home, doing the work of morality, performing the necessary economic duties of human life, in high positions and in low, everywhere, men are surrounded by temptations, by evils; and no man can avoid them or evade them. He cannot shut himself out from them.

When summer comes, and I leave my house, I shut it tight. Every window is closed, the blinds are fastened, and the curtains are rolled down. Now the house is clean, and

clean it shall be. But through the window, in spite of the shutter and in spite of the curtain, the dust slips in; and when I return I could write my name on every bureau and on every drawer in every apartment. There is no solitariness in a house such that dirt cannot find it. And men may shut themselves out from life, and think that they have between them and the various temptations to which they are liable such impediments that they cannot be reached; but they are mistaken. In your quiet home, in the solitary places to which you resort, temptations still come where you are; and no man is let alone. Through much tribulation are we destined to go forward in life. No matter what your circumstances are, your journey upward is a journey step by step through all manner of difficult ways. Life is a battle, and it is to be fought from first to last. There are some pauses to be sure, there is a space here and there, where pæans are lifted up, and victories are celebrated, and chants are sung of hopes that lie in the horizon of the future; but nevertheless, continuously, and in every part of the soul—in the intellect, in the moral sentiments, in the social affections, and in the basilar forces, the passions and appetites which are most needful in their place as a means of impelling men forward in the strife—man is being tried, pushed and beaten down. He is intensified where he should be moderate; he is dried up in things which should flow; he is fiery where he should be cool, and cool where he should be fiery. So when a man attempts to carry himself, with his complex parts, in symmetry and harmony, he is perpetually thrown out of concord and unison.

On every side temptations beset men. Nor is there any possibility of their getting rid of them. They are to be met, and they are to be overcome, so that at last we may get through safely.

Nor is it enough that men should have intensity of desire. It is necessary from the nature of the conflict through which we are passing that there should be continuity of feeling and of effort.

Oh, if we could do by character what we can by money, how splendid it would be! A fortunate speculation will

sometimes sweep into a man's coffers all that he needs; and if men only knew only one single word, how happy they would be to-day! That word is *enough*. Why, there have been thousands of men who have had enough, if they had only known how to be contented with it; but no, they had the gambler's greed, and the earnings of to-day were put at stake to-morrow; and then, inflamed with hope, they began again. Men are eager for a little, that it may be yeast to raise more; and they are desirous that that more shall have many children, and that those many children shall have many again; and so the thoughts and desires of men in regard to wealth multiply and multiply. Like circles, which when made on the tranquil surface of the water run far out of sight, so are the thoughts and desires of men. Thousands have gathered in enough—that is to say, enough to feed them, to clothe them, to bring all instruments of culture about them, to advance their children in education, and to put them forward in life sufficiently to enable them to achieve their own way.

(And here let me say that the child that is lugged through life on the back of his parent is no better than an Indian papoose. He is nothing but an everlasting baby. And no persons go though life well except those who have learned to stand on their own feet, and to achieve their own success.)

But as I was saying, thousands of men have had money enough to support themselves and their families, and to give their children an education, and to set them up in life; and some are happy enough to know it, and while continuing active in good works do not toil in the acquisition of money. But we cannot do by character what we can by money. I may buy me a farm, and stock it, and build a house and a barn on it, and can live contentedly; and I may feel that I have enough of this world's goods; but no man can say this of character, or disposition, or knowledge. No man has enough of these. Born as sparks, we are to kindle to a flame; and the flame is to go on enlarging and enlarging till it shines unto the perfect day. We are brought into this world by the smallest, at the least, and in the lowest, and we are to rise by its disciplines to the highest—to a stature which no man can

measure, and of which no man can have any conception. And this is a work which requires incessant building.

Mark the growth of a stately edifice such as that which is going up now in New York under government auspices. How long the walls have been rising! How long the materials have been accumulating! But the work must go on, or that which has been done will be lost. The building as it stands is of no account. The storms can now come into it from above, and on every side. The structure must be completed if it is to serve the purposes for which it was designed.

Men are building their characters. Some are laying the foundations, and some are carrying up the side walls; but no man can stop. As long as the elements of this world beat upon him he must go on; and it is not until he is roofed in, it is not until he is in the mansions above, that the continuous strife will cease which goes to make his perfected manhood.

Men who go up on inclined planes are pulled back incessantly by the attraction of gravitation; and unless they put forth effort incessantly they slide down again. So we that are on the upward road from the animal toward the angelic are pulled back incessantly by the gravitation that tends to draw men down to the lower condition of life. Every endeavor to go upward is attended with work. Men who carry burdens up hill must exert themselves till they get to the very top; and so we, through life, must exert ourselves incessantly to the very last.

"Put on the whole armor of God."

If one omits a single part of his armor, he leaves a port open for death to enter. If the part is exposed where the helmet should be, the stroke may light there, though the man be protected everywhere else. And what boots it that his head is protected if he leaves his corselet off, so that the spear or the arrow may pierce him through the heart? If one part of the armor is left off all the rest is useless. The *whole* must be put on.

When the careful householder retires to bed, he locks the front door, he fastens the front windows, the rear windows and the kitchen windows; and all that he neglects is the front basement door. That he forgets to lock. He might as

well have left the whole house open; for to lock every door but one is to leave all unlocked, to all intents and purposes.

What if, when the wind rages, you shut every window but one; will not the wind find you as certainly as though you left all the windows open?

When the winter sets in, and you would protect your flowers, it is needful to protect them on the north, on the south, on the east, and on the west. Any amount of protection, if you leave one side open, is invalid and worthless, and the smiting frosts shall come in.

So the lack of a single quality in a man destroys the value of all the qualities which he has. A man may have the noblest intuitions, he may form the noblest purposes, and he may engage with the utmost enthusiasm in right courses, but if he lack the single quality of patience, the want of that undoes the whole. One might knit and knit and knit, through the live-long day, but if at night a child ravels and ravels and ravels all that was done during the day, it is rendered completely void. Men may by the mere want of perseverance bring to naught the noblest things after the noblest endeavors; and so they do, largely.

Our moral experiences are flashes. Would that they were such flashes as light-houses give, which revolve at times with diminished and extinguished light, only the more to make emphasis with the renewed gleam on the eye of him who, afar off at sea, is reading the signs and tokens of the shore. Men do not intermit their experiences in this way. They let the fire go out.

The housewife puts her tea-kettle on—for tea must be made. Shavings are heaped up under the kettle, and are lighted. Soon they are all in a blaze; and for a moment the water begins to simmer; but presently the fire goes out; and she, going out too, forgets her tea; and when she speedily comes back, it is as if there had been no fire. So there is no tea, and there is no meal. How often do we, in like manner, kindle a momentary zeal! How often do we inspire intense enthusiastic feelings that quickly run their course, and turn to ashes, and destroy our purposes, and turn our feet aside from the true path!

Now, the continued action and the comprehensive unity of all the graces of the soul are indispensable to the building up of a right character, and the attainment of an inward and Christian manhood. There are many Christians who set themselves to the acquisition of single excellences, to the neglect, and almost to the ignoring of others. One man is negative. He is very careful not to do anything that is wrong—and this is right. He watches his thoughts, his feelings and his every-day actions, to keep them from going wrong; and he seems to think that when thus he has put a bridle on his lips, when he has shut off all wrong, he has made great attainment.

Surely, it is a great deal to avoid wrong-doing; but what would you account that husbandry to be worth which succeeded only in keeping down weeds? A man goes on plowing and plowing, harrowing and harrowing, hoeing and hoeing; and he rejoices, as July comes on, saying, "There is not a weed on my farm—*not a weed.*" Round and round he goes, looking into every corner, and under every hedge, to spy out any weeds that may have been left; and he says, "Not one weed shall grow on this farm." But where is thy corn, O farmer? "I have no corn." Where is thy wheat? "I have no wheat." Where are thy fruits? "I have no fruits." What hast thou? *No weeds!*

How many there are who are circumspect, and are in earnest, not only, but whose whole care is not to speak a wrong word, nor to speak a word in the wrong place! The result is that they succeed in doing nothing. Their life is comparatively vapid and void, because they have adapted themselves and confined themselves to one single element. They violate no propriety, but they are living negative instead of positive lives.

Now, to avoid evil is good only so far as it impels you to perform the right; only so far as it leads you to grow in the direction of true manliness.

We feel that for one to be equable and steady of mind, and to be even sober, is not criminal: we believe that it becomes a man who is the creature of two worlds sometimes to be thoughtful and grave; but for a man to act as though he

thought simply avoiding wrong and then looking solemn was the whole duty of man—this is a serious mistake. I do not count it against a man if he is so made that he cannot help being solemn—because I have known a great many solemn men who were, after all, good men, notwithstanding the fact that solemnity is a mask behind which the devil dances in more hypocrisies than any other; I do not blame men for being solemn where it is natural to them, and they cannot avoid it; but where men emphasize solemnity, and feel that going through the ritual of duty day by day consists in maintaining a negative propriety, and being intensely solemn every day as if their thoughts were dwelling on evil subjects—that kind of piety I condemn. And yet, how many affect it! and how little it affects them!

Others there are who, because their natures are emotive, and because their feelings are moved as easily as mercury is moved up and down in the barometric tube, have the idea that being intense, and feeling quick and deeply, and pouring out their emotions readily, is being like somebody. They love to see men who have feeling. They are themselves children of emotion, and they intensify that quality; and it is a thing to be desired. As calmness and tranquility are to be desired, so are tides and flames. But if one gives himself simply and only to these; if his Christian experience is to be measured by outbursts of feeling, by periodic emotions, coming to-day and skipping to-morrow, like the chills and fever—if one so regards religion, how imperfect is his understanding of it! How treacherous, how transient, how foolish are those hopes, those inspirations, and those endeavors after a manly life which are not permanent!

There be others who devote themselves to practical life, as though that were the whole of character-building. They do not esteem very highly those men who spin cobwebs in moonshine, as they say; who indulge in what they call *metaphysics*. They do not think very much of philosophy, which bewilders men, and sets them by the ears, and leads them into everlasting disputes. And as to sentiments, they do not believe in them. They like substantial things. They like to see men who take flour to the poor, and carry tea and coffee

and sugar to the needy. They admire those who make pantaloons and give them to ragged boys. And so do I. I like practical piety. I like to see that kind of godliness which serves the outward wants of men. But why should some persons say, "What is the use of sentiments? What is the use of inspiration? What is the use of a faith which lifts men into the invisible?" And why should other persons go to the opposite extreme, and say, "What is the use of practical religion?" Both of them are necessary to the symmetry of Christian character. Faith that works by love, and love that works by imagination—these are to be united in every true Christian. They should go hand in hand. And yet, how are men continually, as it were, standing on one leg, as if both feet were not needful to locomotion!

How many men insist on single virtues! One person is frugal and economical; and his criticism of his fellow-man is on that point which is over against his own virtue. Another person is generous to a fault; and his criticism is on that point which is over against his virtue. Men's criticisms of others are generally laudations of themselves. How many men are partial in their development! How few put on the whole armor which belongs to a man when he is fully developed in mind and in body, and stand perfectly clad with weapons both offensive and defensive!

Let me say, still further, that to build up the character all together is much easier than to build up any single qualities. There is a great advantage in the coherence of virtues. One virtue tends to find another, and to help another. Thus the supreme virtue, the mother of all virtues, the fountain from which every virtue flows—the great disposition of Benevolence—that fundamental and controlling law of Love which likens us to God—the law which Christ himself exemplified—that law which is, if I may so say, God (for God is love)—that one virtue in a man tends to devolop out of itself the whole circle of virtues; and these strengthen each other by contiguity and sympathy. If a man is in the disposition of a true benevolence, it is easy for him to cultivate humbleness of mind; and he that cultivates humbleness of mind finds little difficulty in joining meekness with it; and he

that has humility and meekness always has patience; and he that has humility and meekness and patience finds very little trouble in the matter of long-suffering; and he that has long-suffering has faith; and he that has faith has hope; and he that has faith and hope has zeal, and he that has zeal springing from faith and hope, and all the other virtues which take their rise in love, has knowledge. For in spiritual discernment love is the great interpreter. Love is the one philosopher. It comprehends all other graces. It teaches us, and it inspires us. We think under its inspiration in various directions. It impregnates the understanding, so that we become wise in things which cannot be brought out by science, and which are transcendent. It is easier, then, for men to build up the Christian graces in fellowship, as it is easier for a man to travel in company.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

And so it is with all the virtues. They love company. By taking hold of hands they give momentum to each other. It is easier for a man to put on the whole armor than a part of it. It is easier for a man to be perfectly than partially equipped.

In view of these considerations, I scarcely need to say that the crying fault of men who are attempting to live Christian lives is feebleness, or weakness. Men lack strength, vigor, intensity, breadth. Christians are not voluminous. Too often men who attempt to live Christian lives are so narrow in their conceptions that when they have put one faculty in sovereignty, they refuse to put confidence in any other faculty; and they strive to humble themselves all through. Men often, by subduing the strongest elements, feelings, affections of their nature, become almost negative.

I have seen many men who were made men by joining the church; I have seen many men to whom the church was as the garden of the Lord, where they had root-room, and room for their boughs, and where the wild boar of the fields could not whet his tusk against their trunk; I have seen many men to whom the church was as a father, a nurse, and a mother; and yet, on the other hand, I have seen the

church spoil men who before were genial, sympathetic, full of cheer, full of laughing gladness. They thought when they came into the church they must be severe with themselves, and gird themselves, and lace themselves so that they could not breathe. They came into the church with a generous flow of natural affections; but they put on artificial manners, and became cold and uninteresting. They did not sanctify, by the power of love, the gifts which God had given them. Having wit and a general buoyancy of spirits, instead of letting them flash out in the service of religion, they thought it necessary to rake them up and hide them; and so they became inane. They were good—O yes, just as juices boiled down till they are saccharine are good. Many persons boil themselves down to a kind of molasses goodness. It is not such goodness as there is in the live peach, in the luscious apple, or in the delicious pear. It is not such goodness as has in it the power and the sharpness which belong to a combination of acid and sweet. It is inspissated goodness. It is partial goodness, joined to feebleness, caution, fear.

How many persons are in the world as flies that have been caught in some sweet liquid, that have got out at last upon the side of the cup, drabbled, and that crawl up slowly, buzzing a little to clear their wings! Just such Christians I have seen, creeping up the side of churches, soul-poor, imperfect, without inspiration, and drabbled. If it must needs be so, that is better than nothing; it is better than to die without moral rebound; but this is not the whole career. You are called to manliness, and to strength, and to variety, and to development. You are called to an all-sidedness in Christian life.

"Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

These, and whatever good things there are anywhere, add to your stock; for this it is to be a Christian. It is to have in one's self all attainable excellences, or to seek them. They are to be sought by different degrees of power and skill, there

being gradations all the way up. There is every variety and every vicissitude. Nevertheless, it is the ideal of a Christian man that he should be a Christian all over, all the time, in everything, growing stronger and stronger, better and better, to the end. That is a noble standard.

I am not ashamed to preach thus to young men and maidens. I do not stand to rebuke them, and say, "You are sinful because you are living too much in the enjoyment of pleasure." I say to them: You are called to religion because there is the broadest pleasure in it. It is a pure and undying fountain. It enlarges you. It makes you more than you can make yourselves in the ways in which you are living. I blame you for narrowness. I inveigh against you for throwing yourselves away. Because you emasculate your nature; because you are so much in your own light; because you are content to eat such poor food, and to have such meager joys; because you are spending the little that you have to no purpose; because you waste your transient hours, and do not care for the eternity that rolls before you—this is why I blame you. This is why I scoff at you. This is why I ridicule you. This is why I say, "Fool! fool!" to you. I say it, not because you are strong and courageous. Strength and courage are good. Be more strong, more courageous, more bold, more joyful. Take in the whole sense of what a man's life is in this world. Find, if you can, an ideal of manhood that is like the Christian ideal—so generous; so sweet; so in affinity with everything that goes upward; so opposed to everything that goes downward; so in alliance with noble instincts for this life and for the life that is to come.

It is in accordance with this ideal of Christian manhood that I call you to be men in Christ Jesus—not sectarians; not wasp-waisted, critical Christians; I call you, not to narrowness, and gloom, and despondency, but to energy, to combat, to victory, to joy, to hope, to all firmness and courage, and to the realization in the eternal sphere of that which here we dimly conceive, and there shall see face to face.

May God give to us who are in the Christian life more of the symmetry, more of the richness and sweetness, which belong to the ideal Christian. May God call from their

thoughtlessness, from their narrow, imperfect, unripe ways, those who are walking without God and without hope in the world. Remember how fast life is going; and if you have anything to do, O young man, do it speedily. You are not far from Greenwood. Not on the rose is the blush fairer than on your cheek; nor in the lily is the white more delicate than on your brow; and yet, in a year flowers will grow over some of you. You are on your way; you are not far from the grave; and it behooves every one of you, when you know not who shall go and who shall stay, to have your loins girt about, and your lamp trimmed and burning, that at whatever hour the Bridegroom and the Bride shall come, you may be ready to go out and meet them.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU ever-blessed God, we thank thee for all the light which has been shed abroad from thee upon the earth. We thank thee that we know what we know. Though it is but a part; though it is but dim; though we see through a glass darkly, we rejoice that even the little is so effulgent; and we look forward with ardent expectation to the disclosures of the life that is to come. For if that which the senses may understand be glorious, how much more glorious is that which shall transport our ransomed spirits to the paradise above. We rejoice that thou art made known to us by so many tokens; by so many symbols. We rejoice that the names with which thou hast crowned thyself are names which bring to us everything that is pure, and just, and true, and loving. We rejoice that thou hast developed in us the power of somewhat understanding thee. And thou shinest more and more refulgent as we ourselves grow deeper and purer and more in love with that which is true and just. But what shall be the vision when we come to that world of blessedness where there is no sun, nor need of it; and no moon; but where thou art the light; where day and night are gone; where there are no marks of limitation; where there are no lines of latitude or longitude; where there is no change of seasons known; and where the spirit-form shall understand as it is understood! We aspire to that glorious vision. We know our inferiority. We feel the continual pressure of temptation. We know the weaknesses of life. We stumble, and we fall. We are verily little children, without their simplicity and their purity. We have all their faults, but how little have we of their excellence! We confess what we are now as an argument of thy mercy; for thou art one that canst spare. Thou art infinite in compassion and in sympathy, and art drawn to us by that which would repel us one from another. How proud we are against those who offend us! How hard and cruel are we in our revenges! How quick we are in our anger! But thou hast infinite patience. Thou art longsuffering. Thou dost wait to be gracious. Thou canst not speak of thy kindness but as *loving* kindness, nor of thy mercies but as *tender* mercies. We crown thee with our praise. We draw near to thee with the little confidence which our hearts know how to give. We give thee the best. We aspire, we yearn, to know, and to be better worthy to know thee. Fill us with thy Spirit, that we may achieve great things in life, in courage, in patience, in bountifulness, in perseverance, and in every good word and work. We pray for those who labor in our midst; for all who teach; for all who have compassion upon the poor; for all who seek to visit waste places, and are drawing around about them, by the law of kindness, those who need succor and help. Will the Lord bless them, and crown their efforts day by day with radiant hope and with gladness. We pray that they may not be weary in well-doing. Even in the most desperate cases may they be sustained by the thought that they shall reap in due season if they faint not.

We pray that more and more those who are in darkness may be brought into light. Have compassion upon those who are out of the way. Look upon those who are vicious and criminal, and have

compassion upon them. Our hearts, when we think of the multitudes who are suffering, and are ignorant, and are filled with evil, are turned within us; and we pray for them, and entreat that influences may be brought to bear upon them which shall ransom them from their adversaries, and bring them back from all that is bad to all that is good, manly and pure, in Christian living.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to go with all those who to-day are preaching the gospel. Bless the sermons that have been preached in so far as they have set forth the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. And we pray that the light of the gospel may be shed abroad over the earth, leaving no unillumined place. We pray that thy work may be continued until the knowledge of God shall be a universal possession; until the love of Christ shall dwell in all our hearts, and subdue them to thyself.

Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We ask it for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, wilt thou grant thy blessing to rest upon the word which has been spoken. May it encourage men to endeavor. May it inspire effort in those who are listless and careless. We pray that thou wilt open the understandings of thy people, and the understandings of those who are living without Christian hope and Christian purpose. We pray that thou wilt bless this church, and make it as the garden of the Lord; and may the truths which are spoken here from day to day be divinely guided, divinely inspired, divinely blessed. Accept our thanks for the service, the joy and the experience of the day. Go home with us to-night. Abide with us through all the week. May we so live with thee that we shall find that thou art doing to us what the sun is doing to all the land over which it shines, bringing forth all sweet and blessed things. So, as we draw near to the heavenly land, may we be as they that draw near to the tropics, where growth never ceases. And, leaving behind all infirmities, all weights and all bondage, may we rise disenthralled, perfected, to rejoice in thy presence evermore. And to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, shall be the praise. *Amen.*

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